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New York

President:	Mr. Adom	(Côte d'Ivoire)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Elé Ela
	Ethiopia	Mr. Amde
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Yemen to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, to participate in this meeting.

Mr. Griffiths is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Amman.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Griffiths.

Mr. Griffiths: I come before the Security Council today with some good news and a message of hope. After two and half years of missed opportunities, I think it is fair to say that the political process to find a comprehensive solution to the conflict in Yemen has finally resumed. During our consultations in Sweden this week, parties to the conflict reached several agreements, included in the Stockholm declaration, which came into force on 13 December upon the publishing of the documents. That is no small achievement, which was made possible first and foremost by the commitment of the parties. The credit goes to them. I was extremely impressed by their dedication: all made concessions and all engaged, in-depth and at length, intensively and in good faith. Last week's consultations saw the "highest level of interaction between the parties ever seen in consultations on Yemen", as said by representatives of the different parties we heard during the week we were there.

I am sure that all members of the Council will share my sincere gratitude to the Government of Sweden for hosting us. Ambassador Olof Skoog and his colleagues understood better than any of us what was needed to make the consultations a success. I know that feeling was shared by all those present, including the leaders of both delegations, and we thank them.

For members of the Council and members of the international community, Sweden is also their success. The agreements reached would not have been possible without the extraordinary level of support from world leaders. I certainly feel very privileged to have been able to rely on them. I am thankful to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, who showed his personal support for the process at vital times and for the agreements we negotiated in Sweden.

I am grateful to President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour, who followed our negotiations very closely, returned to Riyadh during the process and whose involvement was key on all files. It was President Hadi himself who personally confirmed to the Secretary-General, yesterday morning, his approval of the various proposals before us, on behalf of his delegation.

I am also grateful to the leadership of Ansar Allah, Abdulmalik al-Houthi, who demonstrated his commitment to progress at the talks throughout the consultations. I understand that he was in constant communication with his own delegation. The heads of both delegations, Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Yemany and speaker Mohammed Abdul-Salam, had a very difficult task, as is normally the case. But they led their delegations with professionalism, discipline and perseverance. It was not an easy exercise, but I thank them both for their outstanding performance.

I also thank Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, who, as members of the Council know, made a flying visit only yesterday to the talks at a crucial moment.

This outcome would not have happened without the considerable support and logistical arrangements to make the talks happen, and in particular from the Sultanate of Oman, the Kingdom of Kuwait and the Saudi-led coalition.

Last, but absolutely not least, allow me to place on record here my personal thanks for the leadership of the Secretary-General. As I have said to the Council before, Mr. Guterres is very familiar with the issues on Yemen and keeps us all very focused. We were in frequent contact the past two weeks in particular. His meeting in Buenos Aires at the Group of 20 with the Saudi Crown Prince ensured the last-minute clearances essential to move the 50 injured from Sana'a to Muscat just two days before the consultations. He took time out from his as-

ever arduous schedule in Europe to make a subsequent visit to the consultations themselves in Sweden from Wednesday night to Thursday night, for those vital last 24 hours, which was obviously instrumental in making the agreements happen. Naturally, I am most grateful for his leadership.

What did we achieve exactly? First, lest we forget, both parties turned up on time. The Government of Yemen had done that before, but they were now joined by the delegation from Sana'a, and that was no small achievement, given what had gone on before. Many people and Governments can claim credit for that, and I have already thanked them. But I am grateful also to the two delegations for arriving ready to work.

Proceedings in Sweden consisted of eight days of hard work. Meetings were punctual. The parties laboured daily on texts, as well as principles. What began as meetings of a formal nature became, over time, true engagements between people from both sides who know each other and seek agreement over difference. I would not want to overstate the level of confidence reached between the two sides at that first encounter, but they did business together, almost always in good spirits. But then more than mere attendance, of course, there were a range of agreements made — the details of which have all been published and are available to members of the Council. What are those agreements?

First, and most dramatically, the parties finally agreed to end the battles in Al-Hudaydah. For months, the Council has called for just such an agreement, and I believe we now have it. It entered into force upon publishing those papers on 13 December. It includes phased, but rapid, mutual withdrawals of forces from both the three Al-Hudaydah ports and the city. That will be achieved in the context of a governorate-wide ceasefire.

The United Nations was asked to monitor the compliance of the parties to those commitments. I am sure the Council will want to address that requirement. A robust and competent monitoring regime is not just essential, it is also urgently needed, and both parties have told us they would very much welcome it and, indeed, depend upon it. At the instruction of the Secretary-General, speaking himself from Sweden, I understand that the relevant departments in New York and elsewhere are already active on the planning for urgent deployment, subject to the decisions of the Council.

I should add, too, that I spoke only this afternoon to General Patrick Cammaert, who all members of the Council know, I am sure, for his exceptional achievements. He has kindly dropped his other responsibilities to lead the monitoring component of the agreement. We hope to see him out here in the region as soon as the middle of next week. Being present in the field soon is an essential part of the confidence that needs to go with the implementation of the agreement.

Al-Hudaydah has been the focus of international attention this year for a reason — not merely because it is the centre of gravity of the conflict, but also because it is the vital lifeline, as Mark Lowcock will no doubt remind us today, for the humanitarian programme upon which millions of Yemenis depend. The ghastly prospect of famine, of which Mr. Lowcock has reminded us, has made solving Al-Hudaydah and its propensity for battle both urgent and necessary.

For that reason, the precise nature of the design of the agreed withdrawals revolve around humanitarian needs and requirements. Therefore, allowing the United Nations the lead role in the ports, as a first step, is a vital response to that humanitarian requirement. We hope to see that happen within days. The United Nations will take on a leading role in supporting the Yemen Red Sea Ports Corporation in the management and inspections at the Al-Hudaydah, Saleef and Ras Issa ports, which will include enhanced monitoring by the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism. The United Nations country team, under the leadership of my colleague and friend Lise Grande, has developed a plan to seek specific support from Member States to the port. Lise and her agency colleagues have been integral to shaping the agreements on Al-Hudaydah, and two of her colleagues were with us throughout the talks in Sweden. I am very grateful to her and to them for their presence. They will play a lead role in the civilian aspects of the deal.

But I would like to stress one important aspect of the Al-Hudaydah agreement. It is an outlier. Very deliberately, the arrangements agreed on, particularly as regards governance, and the temporary arrangements of governance, in Al-Hudaydah, intend to set no precedent for the future. They are time-bound. They do not confer any new sense of legitimacy or sovereignty. It is a humanitarian stop-gap to save lives and, we hope, turn the tide of war towards peace.

The parties have also reached a mutual understanding to ease the situation in Taiz, with the prospect of opening humanitarian corridors to allow the safe passage of goods and people across the front lines, the reduction of the fighting in the governorate and the deployment of demining operations. The parties in Sweden agreed to the establishment of a joint committee between themselves and the United Nations in the lead to secure negotiations on the agreements to make those objectives happen as soon as possible. We hope that the committee will meet soon and agree on a plan to bring some respite to the people of Taiz from the situation that they have suffered for many years.

Before arriving in Sweden, the parties, in the first agreement between them in the course of the entire conflict, had already agreed to the establishment of a joint committee to provide and plan for the mutual release of all prisoners. As I have said to the Council before, this was the first injunction to me when I took up these responsibilities by President Hadi Mansour, who urged the United Nations to focus on the release of prisoners, the important humanitarian nature of which is so clear. The committee, which was established, met frequently in Sweden, with the two sides exchanging lists of up to 15,000 prisoners. They were very lucky to have the full support and involvement and presence in Sweden of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). We hope, with the ICRC in the lead, for a mass exchange, as soon as mid-January, of up to 4,000 prisoners released and able to return to their families.

We did not reach agreement on all the items that were on the table in Sweden. We were not able to reach an agreement on the opening of Sana'a airport, and we were not able to reach agreement on the measures needed to improve the operations and reach of the Central Bank of Yemen as a condition for the full payment of the salaries of all civil servants. However, we will continue to work with the parties between sessions to seek agreement on those issues. Finally, but not least, the parties have agreed to reconvene at the end of January. This was a particular point raised by the Secretary-General with President Hadi Mansour when they spoke yesterday.

In Sweden, the parties finally also discussed my framework, elements of which I presented to the Council in June. The key principle of that framework, based on the three references — the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference and relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2216 (2015), is to restore State institutions and the State monopoly of force by providing a clear political future to all parties and to all those who have a say in resolving this conflict, and indeed to return Yemen to a state of civil politics and peace.

The parties have agreed to discuss this framework at the next round of consultations — ideally, as I have mentioned, before the end of January. I am very encouraged by this commitment. I am very pleased by the generally positive responses of the parties to this framework. I think it is fair to say that Ansar Allah is in agreement with the general tenor of all its elements. The Government of Yemen has some reservations, which I very much understand and respect. The next step will be serious consideration of the document and its implications. In this way, we hope to move from the essentially humanitarian theme of Sweden to a first serious consideration of the issues that need to be addressed between these parties if the conflict in Yemen is finally to be resolved.

I also come before the Council today with a call for caution. Our collective achievements this week were — I hope Council members will agree — a significant step forward, but what is in front of us is a daunting task. As ever in the context of such negotiations, one realizes at the end of negotiations that the hard work is only about to begin.

People ask us whether we can trust the parties to implement the agreements that they made together in Sweden. All of us no doubt have different views on this. My own is that this is not about whether we can trust one or the other on this or that commitment. This is about helping them both to make it happen, reporting on their success and noting those areas where they fall short of that. Therefore, verification is the key to building trust. I personally hope that the Council will play a part in keeping international attention on the minutiae of the implementation of these agreements.

Having said that, I can also confirm the public and private statements made to the Secretary-General by all involved at those consultations that the promises will not remain only on paper. We believe these statements. We have reason to believe them, and we all hope to see their promises reflected in the next days.

Before the consultations, I was asked by both sides whether the other side was serious. This is a frequent reference within the context of the conflict in Yemen,

but, frankly, I was not really sure until about two weeks ago. Today, I am more confident. However, more than this, what Sweden demonstrated each day was the existence of an absolute international consensus on the need for progress and on the simple proposition that only a political solution can resolve this conflict. Among us in Sweden were the representatives of those Governments accredited to the Government of Yemen. Their ambassadors were with us. They were in daily contact with the parties — the permanent members of the Council very prominent among them. Without their help, we would not have reached the point where we are today. This sense of international consensus and commitment was of great importance not just for the parties in Sweden, but also evidently for the people in Yemen, who are finding some small signs of hope for the future.

As the Swedish Foreign Minister said to the press at the closing of those consultations, no longer can Yemen be considered a forgotten war. Now we can begin to hope for a track that may lead to its early resolution.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Griffiths for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lowcock.

Mr. Lowcock: A fortnight ago in Yemen, I got a glimpse of what life is like in the world's worst humanitarian crisis. I talked to families that had fled violence raging in their communities, some of them had been living for years under a plastic sheet. I met young mothers who had rushed desperately malnourished children to hospitals. For some, it was their second, third or even fourth visit, because their families could not afford the food or medicine to keep them well once they had been discharged.

So, I can confirm again what humanitarian agencies have known for a long time. A terrible tragedy is unfolding in Yemen and it is getting worse. Millions of people are starving, sick and desperate. They have one message for the world — this war needs to stop.

Council members have just heard Martin Griffiths describe the progress made this week in Sweden. For the first time in a long time, we can see a sign that perhaps things might start to get a bit better, but the people I met see no tangible improvement yet. This week's success must not lead to complacency; in fact, it must do the opposite. Commitments must be implemented. Working towards peace must be accelerated. In the meantime, millions of Yemenis still desperately need assistance and protection.

We have recently had further confirmation of just how bad the situation has become. Last week, a consortium of agencies published the *Integrated Food Security Phase Classification* (IPC) analysis for Yemen. Their report is the most detailed, rigorous food security survey ever conducted in the country. Data was collected in 330 of Yemen's 333 districts, analysed and scrutinized by multiple organizations and reviewed by independent Headquarters experts before publication. The results decisively confirm Yemen's descent toward famine. Even for experienced aid workers, the numbers are shocking. More than 20 million Yemenis — two-thirds of the population — are now food insecure. Ten million of them are severely food insecure — more than twice the number of four years ago. More than half the districts across the country have slipped into emergency conditions — nearly 60 per cent more than last year.

For the first time, the IPC document refers to what are called "Phase 5" conditions in Yemen. The technical term for Phase 5 is "catastrophe". It is characterized by extreme food gaps, very high malnutrition rates and excess mortality. Nearly a quarter of a million Yemenis are literally on the brink of starvation. The IPC is also clear that the war is the primary cause of this crisis. It is no coincidence that two-thirds of the people most at risk of starvation live in Hajjah, Al-Hudaydah, Sa'ada and Taiz. They are the places where the violence has been most intense this year.

As we have told the Council before, the economic crisis is also playing a major role. Yemenis' livelihoods and access to income have been decimated, and agricultural production has fallen by nearly a third. Those developments have left millions of more Yemenis unable to afford food and other essential goods, and food prices are 150 per cent higher than they were before the crisis.

If there is any good news in the IPC report, it is that humanitarian assistance — especially food aid or money to buy food — is having a major impact. It shows that millions of Yemenis are less hungry than they would be without aid. The IPC also tells us what areas and which people are worst affected. The United Nations and partners are rushing now to reach those people and prevent the catastrophe from spreading. We will also do more survey work on an ongoing basis so we can spot the most vulnerable before it is too late.

Since October, I have been seeking the Council's support for five measures to prevent famine from taking hold. Those five steps are more urgent than ever. So where do we stand on them today?

The first is a cessation of hostilities. Up to now, we have seen only a reduction in fighting in some areas, not a full cessation. In the past week, nearly 450 conflict incidents were reported across Yemen, about a third of them in Al-Hudaydah. The agreement on Al-Hudaydah that Martin just described brings us closer to a real cessation. As the details are being worked out, we continue to call for a full cessation of hostilities across the country.

The second point is to protect the supply of food and essential goods and to facilitate aid operations. That means keeping all the ports open, easing entry and movement restrictions, protecting humanitarian supplies and facilitating aid workers in doing their jobs. Restrictions on humanitarian access are a serious and growing problem. I had a useful discussion in Aden with the Prime Minister on imports. Last month, the Government of Yemen lifted restrictions on food imports introduced through Decree 75. In November, food imports through the ports of Al-Hudaydah and Saleef, where most food enters the country, rose by 15 per cent, although the total quantity remained below what was needed.

We also call on the Government to lift restrictions on fuel imports, which are needed to power hospital generators and keep water networks running and for other critical tasks across the country. Those restrictions are currently blocking over 70,000 tons of fuel from entering Al-Hudaydah port. I had a constructive discussion with the Prime Minister on that, and I hope to see positive action soon.

Operations at Aden port, where congestion has been a severe problem, have also started to improve after the Government instructed port authorities to accelerate processing times following my discussions with the Prime Minster. We hope that trend continues. As an immediate step, we want to see the release of some 1,400 containers belonging to the World Food Programme that have been stuck at Aden port for months.

The Red Sea Mills in Al-Hudaydah, which I have talked about repeatedly over the past three months, are an instructive example. Access to the mills has been impossible since fighting escalated around them in September. Fighters have regularly impinged upon the compound, and the site has been repeatedly struck by mortar fire. Early last month, the mills came under the control of Government-backed forces, but access since then has been hampered by difficulties in moving across front lines and concerns that the area — potentially including the entrance to the mills — may have been mined.

Because of all that, enough food to feed nearly 3.5 million people for a month has now sat useless in a warehouse for more than three months. I discussed the issue both with the operators of the mills in Sana'a and with coalition authorities in Riyadh, but as of today we have no idea if the Red Sea Mills can still operate or how much of the donor-funded grain inside has been damaged or spoiled.

The Red Sea Mills are just one site among a very large number of mills, silos and warehouses located in and around Al-Hudaydah. If those sites are hit or damaged, aid operations could very quickly grind to a halt. That is one reason why the progress Martin has described concerning Al-Hudaydah is so important, and why we must all do everything we can to make sure that it translates into action.

In Sana'a, I raised my serious concerns about the restrictions and bureaucratic impediments that humanitarian organizations face, including delays in visas, customs and the registration of non-governmental organizations and unacceptable interference with humanitarian operations. I raised those issues with senior representatives of the de facto authorities, including the President of the Supreme Political Council. Those were constructive discussions, but I have since heard worrying reports that a raft of new restrictions has been introduced, especially for protection activities. Some of those restrictions have come from local authorities and not from the Sana'a level. Based on the firm assurances I received during my visit, I hope that de facto authorities in Sana'a will move quickly to lift those and other restrictions. I am following up on the assurances that I was given.

In all my conversations in Yemen, I also sought commitments from all parties to ensure that fighters stay away from hospitals and other civilian sites and that no armed forces recruit children. Greater commitment is needed on all sides for the protection of civilians, especially women and girls, in this crisis.

The third area is stabilizing the economy. Foreign currency injections over the past two months from the

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have been effective in stabilizing the exchange rate, financing imports of essential goods and starting to pay pensions and civil servant salaries. At present, the Yemeni rial is trading at just over 500 to the dollar, which represents a marked appreciation compared to a few weeks ago. But a dollar still costs more than twice as many rials as it did before the current conflict, and research indicates that the exchange rate needs to come down to about 440 rial to the dollar before it will have a wider impact on people's ability to afford food and other essential goods.

To achieve that, as well as to finance imports, pay salaries and pensions and meet minimum costs reliably, the Government of Yemen is going to need billions of dollars in external support for its budget in 2019. Again, I had constructive discussions with the Prime Minister on that. We are seeing some progress in paying pensions and payment of some civil servant salaries on both sides. However, as yesterday's statement of the International Monetary Fund made clear, we need more decisions and more sustained action in a similar vein. Otherwise, what we will see is that recent progress, which is improving some people's ability to buy food and other essential goods, will simply be lost again.

The fourth area is funding for the United Nations response plan. Agencies are moving now to expand operations. We believe that next year we will need to feed 12 million people every month, including 10 million severely food-insecure people and 2 million displaced people in acute need. That figure of 12 million is a 50 per cent increase over this year. In total, we plan to assist 15 million people — that is half the population. That includes programmes to roll back cholera and water-borne diseases, address malnutrition and improve living conditions for the most vulnerable displaced people.

To ensure that all the food, medicine, household items and other supplies, as well as the aid workers, reach their destinations quickly and safely, our logistics programme must also be financed to expand significantly. That will all require a lot more money. The 2019 United Nations humanitarian response plan is costed ay $4 billion; about half of that is for emergency food assistance. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates recently pledged to provide another $500 million for humanitarian aid in Yemen. That is on top of their joint contribution of $930 million to the United Nations appeal this year. Our understanding is that most of this new money will be channelled through next year's United Nations coordinated humanitarian response plan. That would be a boost to our fund raising, and we hope that it will jump-start contributions from other countries. On 26 February, the Secretary-General will convene a high-level pledging conference in Geneva, co-hosted by the Governments of Switzerland and Sweden.

The fifth area is the most important, and that is for the parties to continue to engage seriously with Martin's process, including implementing the agreements reached in Sweden.

The five points I have been emphasizing are, to remind the Council, a package and not a menu. We need more action on all of them. Notwithstanding the good news from Sweden, there is a long way to go. Earlier today, I chaired another detailed discussion on Yemen with the heads of all the key United Nations and other operational humanitarian agencies. Our collective assessment is that the good news we heard this week has not yet had any material impact on the millions of people who need assistance. Access, the economy and resources are major priorities. The lesson is twofold — progress is absolutely possible but we need much more of it right now. So, I again ask for practical and political support from the Council in the five areas I have outlined.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Lowcock for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Security Council who wish to make statements.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I would like to welcome the new Yemeni representative to the Council. This is a good day for all of Yemen. I want to congratulate and commend Mr. Griffiths and his team for the work they have done to bring about these developments. But, as Mr. Griffiths himself said, we should also thank and commend the Swedish Government, the parties themselves, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, President Hadi and the representatives of the Governments of Kuwait, United Arab Emirates and Oman. My Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt was very pleased to have been able to join his Swedish counterpart in Stockholm for these important developments. Above all, I want to stress how much we owe to Mr. Griffiths and his team and, of course, to the Secretary-General. If I may say so, this is what the United Nations is for. The Council's united support

has helped Mr. Griffiths and the United Nations get to this point.

I will speak briefly today because I think we all have important work to do now to support Mr. Griffiths. I will comment on Mr. Lowcock's remarks afterwards. I was struck by what Mr. Griffiths said about trust among the parties and about international consensus. For the first time in two years, the people of Yemen have been put first, and we commend all the parties for taking that important step. We recognize their leadership and we endorse the agreements they have reached, but Mr. Griffiths' cautions about it being a humanitarian stopgap are very well taken.

I want to refer now to what Mr. Lowcock said about the humanitarian situation on the ground. It is a very sobering reminder of the human consequences still at stake and of how many starving, sick and desperate people remain in the most vulnerable of situations. We therefore have no time to lose. As Mr. Lowcock said, we need to bring about tangible improvements for the people of Yemen, and we need to do that as swiftly as we can.

I thank the Governments of Sweden and Switzerland for agreeing to hold a pledging conference. Mr. Lowcock set out an update on his five asks and defined them. We support that. As the penholder, the United Kingdom will resume work on the draft resolution with all of our colleagues. We plan to endorse the agreements reached, support their implementation and set out urgent next steps. As requested, we will work to address the monitoring requirements with colleagues. We welcome the news about General Cammaert. That is an extremely good step forward. We understand the importance of monitoring compliance and of the United Nations having a leading role in supporting the ports. We hope to be able to work expeditiously with colleagues to bring about a draft resolution that will give the firmest possible support what has been achieved so far and provide Mr. Griffiths and the parties with a solid foundation as they move towards the end of January agreement and framework. We wish him the best of luck with that.

It is vital that the parties that have made such good strides thus far continue to act in good faith and take urgent steps to fully implement those agreements. I would ask all colleagues on the Council to join me in pledging that the Council will do its very best to stay united and to work tirelessly, together with partners throughout the United Nations membership, to support what has been achieved and advance the work to the desperately needed next stage.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I thank Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs for, their valuable briefings. I would also like to welcome the new Representative of Yemen, His Excellency Mr. Abdullah Al-Saadi, whom I wish every success.

In my statement I will focus on two main topics: first, the consultations in Sweden between the Yemeni parties; and secondly, developments in the humanitarian and economic situation in Yemen.

On the first topic, we listened with great interest to the briefing of Mr. Griffiths, which delivers a message of hope with a view to mitigating the scale of the crisis that has beset Yemen since 2014. The round of consultations between the Yemeni parties — hosted by the Government of the Kingdom of Sweden, which we thank for providing all the necessary elements for its success — is a reflection of the international community's commitment and concern to address that crisis, which has reached regrettable proportions and threatens regional peace and security. It also resulted in negative consequences for the humanitarian, economic, and political situations in brotherly Yemen.

The relative and noticeable progress achieved in that round of consultations should be considered a great success in the light of the Yemeni crisis and its circumstances. That progress would not have been achieved without such key factors as the unity of the Security Council vis-à-vis the Yemeni issue, as well as the great role played by the coalition countries through their legitimate support for efforts to overcome all obstacles to the convening of those consultations, not to mention the serious commitment of Yemeni stakeholders to actively engaging in them and cooperating with the Special Envoy.

The State of Kuwait has been supporting efforts to resolve conflicts through peaceful means and mediation, all the more so given that the United Nations role as mediator. We believe in the utmost importance of the United Nations and the resolutions taken by its various organs, especially the Security Council as the responsible organ for the maintenance of international peace and security.

In the light of all this, and given that the solution to the crisis in Yemen must be a political one, the State of Kuwait provided a private plane to transport most of the Yemeni delegation from the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, to Sweden in order to participate in the recent consultations. We hope that all Yemeni parties will invest in the outcome of those consultations and complete the steps specified hereto in order to achieve a comprehensive agreement that will eventually end the disastrous repercussions of the crisis faced by brotherly Yemen.

On the second topic, developments in the humanitarian and economic situation in Yemen, the consultations in Sweden did not lead to a compromise regarding all issues that were discussed there. However, there has been agreement on the port and city of Al-Hudaydah, as well as a declaration of understanding on Taiz. Moreover, an agreement was reached on an implementation mechanism for the exchange of prisoners, which will help to address the adverse humanitarian impact on the brotherly Yemeni people.

The port and the city of Al-Hudaydah exemplify the aggravated difficult humanitarian situation. We believe that the staged agreement reached would, if implemented, lead to a ceasefire and the mutual redeployment of forces to areas outside the ports and cities, allowing the United Nations greater freedom of movement to ensure the safe arrival of humanitarian aid without being impeded or looted as before. Undoubtedly, the agreement would also facilitate the arrival of commodities and commercial goods. The United Nations would scale up its Verification and Inspection Mechanism in that regard.

It is important that revenues from the three ports be channelled to the Central Bank in Al-Hudaydah in order to pay the salaries of civil servants throughout Yemen. That would have a positive impact and alleviate the difficult economic repercussions of the crisis while improving the exchange rate of the national currency, which has recently risen to and stabilized at 450 rials to the dollar.

The Yemeni city of Taiz has endured a painful siege for the past three years. Its inhabitants have suffered deplorable circumstances. We hope that the declaration of understanding reached by the Yemeni parties will end the negative impacts of the siege and spare its inhabitants the risks of the humanitarian crisis. We also hope that Yemeni parties will be seriously committed to implementing the outcomes of the consultations held in Sweden, insofar as that will be a key factor in alleviating the humanitarian suffering and crystallize the efforts of the international community and the important donors towards supporting the humanitarian situation.

Brotherly Yemen looks to the international community and the Security Council to support the positive tangible results of the consultations reached in Sweden. Those results have specific features and will constitute the bedrock of future consultations, to be held early next year. The Council must maintain its consensus-based spirit concerning Yemen, reflecting its unity and ensuring that no messages may be misinterpreted by any Yemeni party.

To conclude, we reiterate our support for the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Martin Griffiths. We underline the importance of his efforts to end the crisis in Yemen being based on the three political terms of reference, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcomes of the National Dialogue and the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 2216 (2015). That would ensure the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen, as well as non-interference in Yemen's domestic affairs.

Mrs. Haley (United States): I thank Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, and Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, for their briefings.

For millions of people around the world, this is a season of hope. This is the time of year that brings out the idealist in many of us. We are reminded that we are all — every one of us — flawed and fallen human beings. But we see a light in the darkness, and we hope that our best instincts can triumph over our worst. It is difficult to imagine more convincing proof of humankind's worst instincts than the pictures coming out of Yemen today. They show innocent children and babies slowly starving to death and succumbing to disease. I will be honest. This may be the season of hope, but hope alone does not make us feel better when we see the pictures of suffering in Yemen. The world's worst humanitarian crisis demands more than hope from the Security Council that peace will come to Yemen. It demands that we take action to hold all the warring parties accountable. It demands that we

address the Iranian aggression at the root of the crisis. It demands that life-saving assistance reach the Yemeni women and children who are suffering the most from the conflict.

Special Envoy Griffiths has brought us encouraging news. We congratulate him on convening the parties in the Yemen conflict and bringing them together, face to face, for negotiations for the first time since 2016. Those talks have produced concrete outcomes, including an agreement for a prisoner exchange. The progress made in Sweden should build on the political will that is necessary for more progress in the future. We welcome the willingness of all parties, including Saudi Arabia, to participate in those confidence-building measures. Most hopeful of all is the news of the ceasefire around the port city of Al-Hudaydah. The success of that ceasefire is critical to addressing the acute, immediate need for humanitarian assistance in Yemen. All parties, including the coalition, must exercise restraint in line with the ceasefire. It is critical that the ceasefire hold in order to allow the space for continued conversations. We expect that in the coming days, the parties will begin withdrawing forces, in accordance with the agreement.

The ceasefire agreement calls for weekly reports to the Security Council. Those reports must show continued political progress and the commitment of all parties. The members of the Security Council will be monitoring that situation very closely. We must be ready to act if one or more of the parties fails to follow through. The next step is to expand the ceasefire to include the entire city of Al-Hudaydah. We call on all the parties to take that step and to show the world they are serious about achieving peace in Yemen. Ultimately, the success of the ceasefire must lead to an agreement on the Special Envoy's framework for a final political settlement. That is the outcome towards which all the confidence-building measures and negotiations are directed — a realistic political framework for peace in Yemen. And the Security Council should not stop focusing on this conflict until that is delivered.

In this season of hope, the international community does not have to be satisfied just with hope for the people of Yemen. We have the ability to change their reality. Human beings created this crisis; human beings can end it. Life and death are on the line, and we are not powerless. We call on all of our colleagues in the Security Council to take the next step to build on what has begun and define the basic political will to save lives — the lives of millions — and bring about peace in Yemen.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I thank Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, for today's updates. I would also like to welcome the new Permanent Representative of Yemen. It must be rewarding for him to participate in his first Security Council meeting on a day of hope.

Yesterday marked an important day. The agreements reached in Stockholm can be the breakthrough that is needed for peace and to end the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. As others have said, our efforts must now turn to immediate implementation and maintaining momentum in the political process. Let me express our very deep appreciation for the extraordinary efforts of Special Envoy Martin Griffiths in that endeavour. We also truly commend the personal engagement of the Secretary-General himself — an illustration of the strong international commitment to the crisis in Yemen and of the urgent need to find political solutions. We also thank those who played a crucial role in making the agreements happen, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman and the Ambassadors accredited to Yemen, including those of the permanent members of the Council. Without intense preparations and active international support, the consultations in Stockholm would never have been possible.

But most of all, we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the Yemeni delegations. Their decision to come together for the first time in more than two years was a significant step towards ending the conflict. As we have just heard, crucial agreements were reached on several issues. Most important was the agreement on a ceasefire in Al-Hudaydah, with a mutual redeployment of forces and a neutral management of the port. Its implementation is now urgent, not least to address the desperate humanitarian situation in Al-Hudaydah and in other parts of the country.

The understanding reached to ease the tensions in Taiz, including with a view to allow for humanitarian corridors and demining, was also important. We fully support the efforts to find an agreement to open Sana'a's airport and to enable the exchange of prisoners, which would constitute important humanitarian measures and build further confidence. Reaching an agreement to continue the dialogue on economic issues is another

essential element. And finally, the commitment to continuing to engage on a negotiating framework will be critical to the important process ahead.

The atmospherics at the talks in Stockholm bode well for moving forward, but as we have just heard, today the situation in Yemen is still the world's worst humanitarian crisis. As the United Nations-led consultations have progressed, fighting, which has included civilian casualties, has continued in many parts of Yemen and the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate, with an increased risk of widespread famine, as outlined by Mr. Lowcock today.

The Stockholm agreement must therefore be urgently translated into concrete action. The Council should come together to support and fully back its implementation. Very much in line with what the representative of the United Kingdom has just outlined, we would like to see a draft resolution swiftly prepared in support of the agreement that includes the United Nations monitoring of the ceasefire in Al-Hudaydah.

We must also continue to fully support — in practical and political terms — the "asks" made by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to alleviate the suffering and prevent widespread famine. The upcoming high-level pledging conference early next year provides a key opportunity for the international community to demonstrate its commitment to the Yemeni people.

The constructive engagement with United Nations efforts by all sides must also continue in order to make progress on the issues that are still pending. We welcome that the parties plan to meet again by the end of January, and we hope to see further progress even before then on the issues left open, as indicated by Special Envoy Martin Griffiths this morning, including on the economy and the Sana'a airport.

We encourage the parties to continue discussions in the same spirit of dialogue and compromise demonstrated during the meeting in Stockholm earlier this week. We appreciate the Special Envoy's efforts to increase the representation of women in the political process, and we commend the Yemeni Women's Technical Advisory Group for their important contribution. In future rounds of talks, however, further efforts are needed to ensure the full and effective participation of women in this process.

In conclusion, we are honoured to have hosted of the United Nations-led consultations in Stockholm. We truly hope that this will mark the turning point for peace in Yemen. We will continue to play an active role in support of sustained United Nations efforts in Yemen. The people of Yemen must now see the concrete benefits of the agreements. It cannot be that we celebrate a diplomatic breakthrough on paper and people continue to suffer.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank Special Envoy of the Secretary-General Martin Griffiths and Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock for their briefings, which provide us with a comprehensive update after the Stockholm discussions.

I would like to start by joining my voice to those of the other members of the Security Council to commend the outstanding efforts and commitment of Special Envoy Martin Griffiths, who convinced the parties to gather around the negotiating table and successfully complete the Stockholm discussions in a truly constructive spirit. Let me also enthusiastically thank the Secretary-General for his personal commitment, which really made the difference, as Mr. Griffiths said.

France welcomes the commitment of the parties, which has made it possible to achieve these initial positive results. We warmly thank the Swedish Government for hosting these talks, and all regional and international partners that supported the discussions.

The holding of these talks is in itself an important first step. Decisive progress has been made on three fronts: the exchange of 4,000 prisoners, a withdrawal of the armed forces from the port and city of Al-Hudaydah in the coming days — and a ceasefire throughout the province — and, finally, the establishment of a mechanism for de-escalation at Taiz. The agreement on Al-Hudaydah, in particular, is essential to progress on the path towards a comprehensive cessation of hostilities. Its implementation must have a positive impact on the whole country, by facilitating the humanitarian response that Mark Lowcock has just stressed as absolutely necessary.

The significant progress achieved in Stockholm is potentially a breakthrough that can mark the turning point towards the end of the Yemeni conflict. The Stockholm talks show that peace is possible in Yemen. Their full implementation requires the firm commitment

of all and the unity of the Security Council in support of Martin Griffiths.

This progress should not obscure the fact that the Yemeni people are still facing an emergency humanitarian situation, which is my second point. And I would like to thank Mark Lowcock and his teams for their exemplary work and for their absolutely clear message. While Yemen is experiencing, as Mark Lowcock just pointed out, the worst humanitarian crisis in the world, with more than 22 million people dependent on humanitarian assistance, or nearly 75 per cent of the population, and a still very high risk of famine, the positive momentum at work in Stockholm must now be translated into reality. We call on all parties to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, in particular with regard to the protection of civilians. We also call on them to respect human rights. France will be both active and vigilant on this subject.

The discussions also allowed progress to be made on other crucial issues, such as the reopening of Sana'a airport and the implementation of economic measures to restore the country's economy. We hope that these discussions can continue very soon on these points, which must converge to create the momentum we are looking for. It is essential that the progress made in Stockholm quickly has a beneficial impact on the ground for the populations in order to create and maintain this impetus towards peace. We call on all States in a position to do so to continue to use their influence to help ensure that all parties comply with the guidelines that have been defined.

In this context, and this is my last point, it is more essential than ever to respond to the requests made by Mark Lowcock and Martin Griffiths. Only a political solution will be able to ensure lasting peace and put an end to the ongoing humanitarian disaster in Yemen. We therefore call for further political discussions to be held as soon as possible in order to build on the momentum generated in Stockholm without delay. In this context, we believe it is important for the Security Council to put all its weight in the balance. Our meeting today demonstrates the strong unity of the Security Council. Let us use it without delay as a lever for action in support of the ongoing efforts.

That is why we are ready to work now with the United Kingdom as penholder on an updated draft resolution, to express our support for the efforts of Martin Griffiths and the important results achieved in Stockholm, but also to respond to the humanitarian emergency by endorsing Mark Lowcock's requests. I would like to echo what my British colleague has just said on this point. This draft resolution will mark the unity of the Council and the international community in support of United Nations humanitarian and political action. We are ready to move very quickly on the subject because, as my British colleague said, we have no time to lose. Be assured, Mr. President, of France's full mobilization in this regard, in support of United Nations mediation and in conjunction with all interlocutors in the region.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the President for convening today's meeting and Mr. Martin Griffiths and Mr. Mark Lowcock for their very important briefings.

We would like to express our appreciation for the efforts they are making in their respective and complementary fields of action, bringing all parties closer to an inclusive political solution to the conflict in Yemen and addressing the worst humanitarian crisis in the world today. We believe that their work should receive the strongest and most unanimous support of the international community, including that of the Security Council.

We would like to welcome the recent understandings reached, such as the valuable support and commitment to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General. We would also like to stress the need to maintain the momentum generated at the meeting held in Stockholm. We join others in highlighting the role played by the host country, Sweden, and the important participation of Secretary-General António Guterres. We would especially like to pay special tribute to the Yemeni parties for the specific commitments they have made and emphasize the urgency of implementing them and giving priority to the attention required by more than 14 million Yemenis exposed to imminent famine.

It is critical to strictly comply with the ceasefire agreed at the ports of Saleef, Ras Issa and especially Al-Hudaydah, which Mr. Griffiths has called the "centre of gravity" of the conflict. We also emphasize the understanding reached in relation to Taiz — another urban centre severely affected by the conflict.

In view of the continuation of the talks in January, we encourage the parties to continue to build trust. We believe that the exchange of prisoners should be followed by other actions, such as the full opening of

Sana'a airport. We welcome the transparency shown in Sweden, which should allow the international community, and the Council in particular, to monitor and to support the implementation of the agreements reached and promote greater confidence among all parties in the peace process.

The withdrawal of forces from Al-Hudaydah and the leading oversight role that the United Nations will play in those efforts require the prompt adoption of a Council resolution. We would like to express our appreciation to the delegation of the United Kingdom for its diligence in dealing with that matter and to underline the importance of keeping the Council united around the priority that should be given to the protection of the civilian population.

We consider it vital that the international community, in particular the neighbouring countries, increase their contributions towards stabilizing and revitalizing the local economy, since factors such as inflation and the devaluation of the currency significantly increase the risk of famine.

We emphasize that achieving sustainable peace will require broad consensus around a shared vision for the future. In that regard, it is essential that the process be inclusive and that all sectors of the Yemeni population be represented. We particularly encourage a greater participation of women and young people.

In conclusion, I emphasize that today, we have reason to be optimistic. However, we must also exercise caution because, while a turning point that allows us to glimpse a better future has been reached, the reality today is that there is much to be done to end the suffering of millions of Yemenis, as we heard in today's briefings. Peru will continue to support the efforts to achieve a political solution in Yemen that puts an end to the serious humanitarian crisis.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): First of all, I would like to thank Mr. Martin Griffiths and Mr. Mark Lowcock for their informative briefings. Our special thanks go to the Special Envoy for his tireless efforts to resume the political dialogue between the parties to the conflict. He has our full support in all his endeavours.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

Allow me to welcome the Permanent Representative of Yemen and to wish him every success.

(*spoke in English*)

During our last briefing on the situation in Yemen in November (see S/PV.8404), we all agreed that a window of opportunity to relaunch a credible political process had presented itself and that it was vital to take full advantage of it in order to restore peace and stability in Yemen. We are encouraged by the positive developments that followed that meeting, especially the first round of consultations between the parties in Rimbo. We thank the Government of Sweden and all other countries that contributed to making that conference happen. We commend the agreement on the exchange of prisoners and the statement of understanding on Taiz. Most importantly, we welcome with enthusiasm the agreement on the cessation of hostilities across Al-Hudaydah governorate and in the ports of Al-Hudaydah, Saleef and Ras Isa. We consider that arrangement to be a major achievement, as it has the potential to lead to the much-needed reopening of the humanitarian corridors.

Poland strongly believes that the outcomes of consultations in Rimbo are the first significant step towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict. It is vital that the parties now deliver on the commitments made in Sweden. We encourage them to take advantage of that progress to continue to build trust, as well as to carry on their engagement with the Special Envoy, in order to pave the way for the resumption of formal peace negotiations. We look forward to the next round of consultations in January. In that vein, we would like to underscore the need to include underrepresented groups, including women and young people, in the political process.

We strongly believe that the support of the international community, and especially the Security Council, is also essential to increase the prospect of peace in Yemen. We therefore stand ready to engage with our partners in the Council on the draft resolution that is to be presented by the United Kingdom.

Although we greatly welcome the progress on the political track, there are still major challenges that need to be addressed in the weeks to come, including the reopening of Sana'a airport and measures to improve the economic situation. We must also remember that the humanitarian situation still requires urgent action, including by implementing the five asks presented by Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock. The grave risk of a widespread famine in Yemen will not be

reduced until unhindered and sustainable deliveries of humanitarian assistance are guaranteed. That is why the swift and full implementation of the cessation of hostilities in Al-Hudaydah is of paramount importance.

To conclude, the consultations in Sweden have proved that despite significant differences, a political dialogue between the parties is possible. There is hope for Yemen. There is hope for improvement of the security situation in the country and for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The window of opportunity is still open.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): Let me first welcome the new Permanent Representative of Yemen to the Security Council and to wish him success in his new function. We thank Martin Griffiths and Mark Lowcock for their informative briefings. They presented us with a message of hope but also one of continued extreme human suffering on the ground. That human suffering should strengthen our resolve to take action in the Council.

The agreement between the parties, particularly on a cessation of hostilities across Al-Hudaydah governorate, is an important spark of hope for the people of Yemen. Yet the threat of famine in Yemen remains unchanged, as Mr. Lowcock just mentioned. That means that the need for urgent action from all of us persists in order not only to support what has been achieved in Sweden but also to address urgent concerns on the ground. In that context, I will focus on three issues: first, the consultations between the parties; secondly, the threat of famine; and, thirdly, the urgent need for the Council to follow up.

On my first point, we welcome the constructive participation of the parties involved in the consultations in Sweden. Like other speakers, we commend the efforts of Special Envoy Martin Griffiths in bringing that about, as well as the unwavering support and involvement of the Secretary-General. We thank our Swedish colleagues for successfully hosting and facilitating those consultations, as well as the many other countries that contributed to making those talks happen, particularly Yemen.

The cessation of hostilities throughout Al-Hudaydah governorate is a much-needed concrete result. Once implemented, that will greatly benefit the ongoing humanitarian efforts. We also welcome the progress regarding the exchange of prisoners and the humanitarian corridors into Taiz. However, the lack of women in the delegations in Sweden is deeply regrettable, particularly after the clear calls made by the international community to address that ahead of the consultations.

The parties now need to capitalize on what they have achieved, put their words into action and create a conducive environment for talks to resume in January. More work needs to be done with regard to the reopening of Sana'a airport, measures to address the economy and, above all else, a framework for a sustainable, peaceful political solution with the involvement of women.

That brings me to my second point — the persistent threat of famine in Yemen. Regardless of the positive developments in Sweden, the humanitarian crisis remains as alarming as it was two weeks ago. The five asks of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to the parties and the international community remain as pertinent as ever. Already, tens of thousands of innocent Yemenis have died of completely avoidable causes, and those staggering numbers will increase exponentially if the cessation of hostilities in Al-Hudaydah does not hold. We have reached a point at which any delay is inexcusable. We need concrete follow-up by the international community.

First of all, we support the further involvement of the United Nations system in the implementation of the agreements. We commend the tasking of Patrick Cammaert with monitoring the implementation of the agreement, as Mr. Martin Griffiths just mentioned, and we express our full confidence in him. He is the right person for the job.

The Security Council should also take action. We therefore welcome and strongly support the United Kingdom's initiative to back up what has been achieved in Sweden with a draft resolution, which should back up the agreement on a cessation of hostilities across Al-Hudaydah governorate, put humanitarian access front and centre and include OCHA's five asks. Let us adopt a draft resolution as soon as possible next week. As Mark Lowcock said, humanitarian funding is crucial, so we thank Switzerland and Sweden for organizing a pledging conference to be held in February 2019.

In conclusion, despite those positive developments, we remain extremely concerned about the millions of Yemeni people on the brink of starvation. It is the responsibility of the Council to support the Special Envoy's efforts, as well as to urgently address the humanitarian crisis. The Council has a huge

responsibility to help end the suffering of the people of Yemen as soon as possible. Let me end my statement by quoting Mark Lowcock: "This war has to stop now".

Mr. Tumysh (Kazakhstan): I join others in thanking Special Envoy Griffiths and Under-Secretary-General Lowcock for their clear and comprehensive updates, and commend them both for their efforts to bring about a political and humanitarian solution in Yemen. They can rest assured of our full support in all their undertakings. My delegation is closely following the recent developments, and I would like to make two points today.

First, Kazakhstan welcomes the political consultations in Sweden and urges all parties to continue to engage in good faith and without preconditions in the political process led by the Special Envoy. We are encouraged by the fact that the consultations took place successfully and by the confidence-building measures announced, including the exchange of prisoners, and we hope that this will move Yemen a step closer to peace. We believe that the Stockholm declaration — in particular with regard to the agreement on the city and port of Al-Hudaydah and the ports of Saleef and Ras Isa; the joint committee for initiating an agreement on the exchange of prisoners; and the mutual understanding concerning Taiz — will have a huge impact on both the security and humanitarian situation in Yemen. The implementation of the agreement is crucial because Al-Hudaydah is the centre of gravity of the war in Yemen. The ceasefire and withdrawal of all forces from the port and then from the city will allow for the opening of the humanitarian corridors to the city of Taiz, which are important to the survival of those people in Yemen who are in need of humanitarian aid.

Secondly, we emphasize that all obligations under international humanitarian law must be respected by all parties, who must take responsibility to mitigate the humanitarian situation by fully cooperating with the United Nations and the relevant humanitarian agencies. Kazakhstan joins others in urging all to refrain from damaging critical civilian infrastructure, violence and indiscriminate bombings that could inflict mass casualties on innocent civilians. It is also necessary to address inflation-related issues. The cessation of hostilities will provide an opportunity to revive the economy, resolve the humanitarian crisis and restore basic public services to the population of Yemen. That is the best way to give those and future consultations a chance to succeed.

Finally, Kazakhstan expresses its unconditional support for the Special Envoy's efforts to achieve a negotiated political settlement through inclusive intra-Yemeni dialogue, with the involvement of the international community, especially the countries of the region.

Mr. Amde (Ethiopia): Let me first welcome the new Permanent Representative of Yemen. We wish him every success in his endeavours.

We thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for requesting this meeting, and we are most grateful for the briefings by Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock.

For the first time in more than two years, the Yemeni parties have made some real, albeit limited, progress towards peace and stability in the consultations in Stockholm, facilitated by the United Nations. We can certainly welcome the agreements reached on Al-Hudaydah, the establishment, a governorate-wide ceasefire, the humanitarian corridor for Taiz and the agreement on the exchange of prisoners. We welcome the agreement of the parties to discuss a negotiating framework at their next meeting. Those are certainly all concrete developments. They offer a real sense of hope, for almost the first time, for the millions of Yemenis who continue to suffer from the consequences of the conflict. Encouragingly, what has been achieved in Stockholm demonstrates what can be done when there is a genuine political commitment.

Those consultations are the result of the prolonged and concerted efforts of many actors. We appreciate the Yemeni parties, which have engaged seriously and positively in the talks. We are profoundly grateful for the tireless diplomatic efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy, Martin Griffiths, and thankful to Sweden for hosting the meeting, the countries of the region and all others who have contributed. We commend all their contributions. It is, at last, a start.

The next stage — the implementation of the agreements reached in Stockholm — is obviously critical. It will require the parties to continue to work together and, equally important, to refrain from any action that could undermine progress. This is a situation that provides the opportunity for the international community to demonstrate its support for the parties to honour their agreements and to insist absolutely that they do just that. The Council must speak with

one voice. The parties must sustain their constructive engagement with the Special Envoy.

The revitalization of the political process is certainly a very positive development and most welcome, but the humanitarian crisis remains, which is of the very deepest concern. Millions are on the verge of famine. The economy of Yemen is collapsing. It requires the total rebuilding of key State institutions and facilities, as well as urgent and continued stabilization measures. The scaling up of financial support for a humanitarian response is now a total necessity, as Mr. Lowcock underlined after visit his two weeks ago. The only way to avert a humanitarian catastrophe of almost unimaginable proportions is urgent and concerted international effort. There are no alternatives left. It is essential that we support the United Nations and its humanitarian partners fully and completely. The measure of progress must be seen in action on the ground. It is imperative that life-saving supplies reach the millions of people in desperate need and that safe passage be provided for distribution. That will be the real measure of success in Yemen.

Stockholm has been a very important step forward, but now we must maintain the momentum and ensure that the parties engage in the next round of consultations, both to sustain the political process and to address the humanitarian crisis. As my Prime Minister recently underlined in a letter addressed to the Yemeni parties, it is only the language of dialogue that can end the unspeakable suffering of the people of Yemen. That is what the people of Yemen expect and deserve, and we must provide it for them. In the past, there have been a number of ceasefires and agreements. We must now throw the whole weight of the international community behind persuading the warring sides to de-escalate the fighting.

In conclusion, the continued diplomatic efforts of Special Envoy Martin Griffiths have our full support, as do the United Nations and its humanitarian partners, in their work to deliver aid for all Yemenis in need. We call on the Council to show its full support for both the political process and the humanitarian work of the United Nations in order to demonstrate its own unity of purpose to bring an end to the suffering of the people of Yemen.

Mr. Elé Ela (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): I welcome the presence among us of Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, and thank them for the informative, clear and comprehensive briefings that they have just delivered on the most recent developments and hopes for peace in the Yemeni conflict.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea wishes to express its satisfaction at the initial success of the meeting held in the Swedish city of Rimbo between 6 and 13 of this month, and thanks the Government of Sweden, through its representative, for having hosted that important meeting. We also wish to thank the delegation of Yemen for having attended that meeting, as well as the United Nations and other international stakeholders that either directly or indirectly made it possible to convene that important meeting.

Three months after the Geneva meeting, which failed to gather all of the relevant parties to the conflict, and just a few weeks before the end of the year, we have finally received information that gives hope to the victims in Yemen and the international community regarding the future of the country. We believe that this has been an important step in allowing real progress to be made towards future talks to put an end to the conflict.

However, our experience of international politics and this very Council urges caution and vigilance. It is now vital that all parties directly or indirectly involved in the conflict come together to work towards implementing the minimum agreed terms of this initial phase of peace talks, including a ceasefire in the entire western province of Al-Hudaydah, a prisoner exchange agreement and the withdrawal of troops from the said disputed port city, among other measures. From the outset of our meetings on the matter, we have all called for the cessation of hostilities in Al-Hudaydah and its surrounding area, owing to the strategic importance of its port for humanitarian operations. Now that that has been granted by the consensus of all national parties, we hope that it will be meticulously respected by all parties involved in the Yemeni conflict.

We hope that the session of consultations that concluded yesterday in Sweden will be the beginning of an irreversible solution to the differences that divide the parties in Yemen today, in order to save its people of Yemen a conflict that has denied them of their human dignity and means of subsistence, such as water, food, electricity, infrastructure and other services, in addition

to an already destroyed economy that has brought the country to its knees and left it rudderless. In that regard, it is important that this new process and any possible actions of the Council take into account the five proposals made by Mr. Mark Lowcock to alleviate the desperate humanitarian situation.

Finally, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea wishes to express its full support for the efforts of the United Nations in Yemen, especially the mediation of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Martin Griffiths, given that his initiative to launch the dialogue process is crucial to our common goal of bringing peace to "the forgotten conflict in Yemen", to paraphrase his earlier remarks, in the hope that the next session of consultations, scheduled for the end of January, will see progressive progress towards reaching the light at the end of the tunnel. We encourage the parties to the conflict to respect this new process.

Mr. Ma Zhaoxu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I wish to thank Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock for their comprehensive briefings. Their efforts to restore peace and stability in Yemen and improve the humanitarian situation in the country are highly appreciated.

China welcomes the important progress achieved in the intra-Yemeni talks in Sweden. The United Nations and Special Envoy Griffiths overcame all manner of difficulties and worked with the Yemeni parties with great perseverance. Secretary-General Guterres went to Sweden in person to lend his support to the consultations and push for breakthroughs in the Yemeni issue, which China applauds. The Kingdom of Sweden hosted the consultations and members of the group of 19 attended the event, making important contributions to the overall success of the consultations. The Yemeni parties made important decisions in the interest of their country's future and the well-being of the Yemeni people, thereby ending the impasse, which we welcome.

We are pleased to note the important outcomes of the consultations in Sweden, namely, the agreement on a ceasefire in Al-Hudaydah, a mutual understanding on Taiz and an executive mechanism on activating a prisoner exchange agreement. More significantly, the Yemeni parties agreed to host the next round of consultations, scheduled for the end of January, to discuss a framework document to facilitate further political negotiations in Yemen. The Swedish consultations therefore mark a good start and their significance is threefold.

First, the ceasefire in Al-Hudaydah governorate was achieved ahead of schedule, which will help to prevent any further deterioration of the Yemeni economy or humanitarian situation. Secondly, the event has the potential to become a key turning point in the situation in Yemen, as well as the starting point for a new political process that will help the parties in Yemen to build mutual trust. Thirdly, it brings hope to the people of Yemen and the international community as a whole. It is inspiring and boosts morale.

Having said all of that, the challenges now confronting the political efforts to resolve the Yemeni issue are also threefold, to say the least.

First, Yemen's national security and economic woes have been snowballing for many years. The problems are chronic and deep-rooted and defy an easy fix, while the broader context remains fragile. Secondly, a ceasefire has yet to be achieved across the whole of Yemen. We cannot afford to underestimate the risk of further military friction or conflict escalation. Thirdly, major differences remain between the intra-Yemeni parties and the foundations of confidence are still shaky. It is particularly important to avoid misunderstandings and accidents.

As the situation currently stands, we believe that the international community should rise to action on three fronts.

First, we must ensure the implementation in good faith of the consultations in Sweden. Efforts should be made to push the Yemeni parties to implement an immediate ceasefire in Al-Hudaydah governorate within the agreed time frame, complete the redeployment of the respective forces as scheduled, implement the prisoner exchange agreement and seek solutions to the Taiz issue. By fully exercising the United Nations oversight function in the port of Al-Hudaydah and taking advantage of the favourable external conditions, including the ceasefire agreement and redeployment of troops, the United Nations should work to ensure safe, swift and unhindered access to Yemen for commercial and humanitarian supplies to be delivered as soon as possible to the Yemeni population, effectively reduce the risk of famine and provide the injured and sick with much-needed treatment.

Secondly, we must build on the Sweden consultations and facilitate a sustainable and effective dialogue in the negotiations process. The Yemeni parties should continue their consultations on the

opening of Sana'a airport to commercial flights and the payment of salaries to Yemen's public-sector staff. The parties should agree at a practicable agreement as soon as possible and build greater mutual trust. We look forward to the parties in Yemen reaching an agreement on a framework document for political negotiations at the end of January to implement a ceasefire across the whole of Yemen and establish a comprehensive package, including political and security arrangements.

Thirdly, the United Nations must continue to play a leading role in mediation and good offices. The Council should continue to lend political support to the intra-Yemeni peace talks and urge regional countries to continue to provide constructive assistance to that end. The international community should increase its humanitarian assistance and provide targeted support, including food, medical and financial assistance. Yemen should receive support in improving its economic situation, stabilizing prices and ensuring the safe, timely and unhindered humanitarian access to meet the basic needs of the Yemeni population.

There is no alternative to the political track in striving to resolve the Yemeni issue. There is no military solution that can secure lasting peace. The international community should maintain Yemen's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity, while supporting efforts to achieve an inclusive solution, through dialogue and negotiation, based on resolution 2216 (2015), including the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its implementation mechanism and the outcomes of Yemen's National Dialogue Conference.

China has been consistently committed to advancing the political settlement process in Yemen. The Chinese Ambassador to Yemen was present throughout the entire process of the consultations held in Sweden. China, along with the rest of the international community, will continue to support the United Nations in advancing the Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political settlement process, with a view to reaching an early solution leading to a comprehensive, lasting and effective settlement of the Yemeni issue.

Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is grateful for the briefing provided by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Martin Griffiths. We take this opportunity to express to him our utmost support and our gratitude for his tireless ongoing efforts to achieve a negotiated solution to the conflict in Yemen. We are grateful also for the briefing delivered by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Mark Lowcock.

My delegation welcomes and commends the active and constructive participation of the parties to the Yemeni conflict in the United Nations-led conference hosted by the Government of Sweden. The outcome of the conference provides a glimmer of hope that must continue to shine ever brighter until we can achieve a peaceful, negotiated solution to the delicate situation prevailing in Yemen.

We take this opportunity to convey to the Government and the people of Sweden our sincere gratitude and appreciation for their contribution to ensuring the holding of this important event. We also express our utmost gratitude to the Special Envoy for all the consultations and negotiations held and the measures taken to ensure that the necessary forum for constructive dialogue was in place, as was seen during the conference.

We also commend the role played by various Member States, including Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and the permanent members of the Council. We wish to highlight also the leadership of the Secretary-General, António Guterres, in this important undertaking.

There can be no doubt that one of the most important achievements of the conference was the signing of the agreement on a ceasefire in the port and city of Al-Hudaydah and on the withdrawal of all armed groups from the ports of Saleef and Ras Isa. The implementation and oversight of the agreement will be entrusted to a committee comprising the United Nations and the parties to the conflict. We would also underscore the commitment undertaken by parties to grant an active role to the United Nations in supporting the Yemen Red Sea Ports Corporation in the administration of the ports of Al-Hudaydah, Saleef and Ras Isa. The agreement provides for the income generated at those ports to be directly transferred to the Central Bank of Yemen for the benefit of the population at large.

We also take note of the progress made towards continued talks between the parties in order to agree upon the future reopening of Sana'a airport, and we highlight the measures taken to initiate a dialogue on the situation in Taiz and on the implementation of the prisoner exchange agreement as a confidence-building measure.

It is important to bear in mind that after four years of clashes and violence, it is the civilian population that has been the most acutely affected by the scourge of war, as has been eloquently stated by Mr. Lowcock. We must recall also that more than 10,000 people have died and more than 2 million have been internally displaced. Food insecurity afflicts approximately two thirds of the population, 8 million of whom are on the brink of famine. This grave situation represents a threat that must be contained and mitigated through effective measures, which will be possible only if all parties commit to facilitating the safe and unhindered entry of humanitarian assistance, food and basic consumer goods, which are crucial to the survival of the population in general and especially for the more than 400,000 children suffering from acute malnutrition, who require urgent assistance.

In that respect, we call on the parties to maintain the spirit of commitment and dialogue that prevailed at the conference and to fully implement and adhere to the agreements reached, as well as to continue to work unconditionally with the Special Envoy to continue the dialogue in January next year, in order to ultimately achieve an agreement that benefits the Yemeni people and promotes their well-being.

We also appeal to the members of the Council to maintain the unity that is necessary to effectively support the aforementioned efforts.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Martin Griffiths, for his detailed briefing on the recent round of intra-Yemeni consultations held in Sweden, as well as to Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock for his overview of the humanitarian situation in the Republic of Yemen. We thank the Government of Sweden for its assistance in preparing and holding these extremely important negotiations, and we welcome the new Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations.

Like many other members of the Security Council, we would like to believe that in the light of the agreements arrived at in Stockholm, we are entering a new stage in the conflict in Yemen. We hope that through further concerted efforts we can establish a ceasefire throughout the country and help the millions of Yemeni civilians in dire need of one kind or another of aid and who are starving and have no access to the necessary medical treatment and medicines. Mr. Lowcock's briefing gives a clear picture of the scale of the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, now the worst in the world. The Rubicon that we have reached as a result of the process launched in Sweden must now be crossed. That will hinge on implementing the agreements reached during the first round of the intra-Yemeni consultations. We must all give the Special Envoy our collective support.

We believe that the first task is facilitating the implementation of the ceasefire agreement and the withdrawal of troops from Al-Hudaydah port and city. Success in that area is important not only to advancing the de-escalation process throughout the country but also to ensuring the sustained delivery of humanitarian and commercial cargo to Yemen's northern regions, where the majority of the country's population is living. We must also assist as much as we possibly can, with United Nations participation, in establishing a bilateral coordination committee to monitor the disengagement of forces in Al-Hudaydah. We believe this part of the agreement package is critical to Mr. Griffiths' further mediation efforts including in the context of the holding of a new round of talks early next year.

We welcome the other important mutual understandings that will help to bring the parties to the conflict to a new level of dialogue and trust, achieved with Mr. Griffiths' active coordination. This applies to the agreements on the exchange of thousands of prisoners of war, which will be implemented before the end of January 2019 under the oversight of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and on the modalities for resuming oil and gas exports.

We would like to highlight the Special envoy's enormous professionalism and the Secretary-General's personal contribution to the successful completion of the Stockholm talks. Russia has also contributed to facilitating progress in the intra-Yemeni negotiation process in its national capacity, as a permanent member of the Security Council and as a member of the Group of 19. In our view, the support to Mr. Griffiths' efforts in Sweden provided by representatives of the international community was virtually ideal. We felt that the cohesive efforts of the five permanent members of the Security Council were particularly helpful to the Special Envoy at critical moments, and we think this effective assistance format should be made permanent.

Some equally important issues remain unresolved, however, specifically regarding the economic front and the airport in Sana'a, and which the Yemenis will have

to agree on in subsequent negotiation rounds. Needless to say, the prospects for their resolution depend a great deal on maintaining the political will of the conflicting parties to implement the agreements that have already been reached. Our shared goal is to keep the political process afloat so that it is the political dialogue that sets the tone for the developments on the ground rather than the other way around. That is the only way to make progress in ending this bloody war, which has done colossal damage to Yemen's economy and people. We have the power to remedy the situation. We must act collectively. We call for further joint efforts in support of United Nations efforts in Yemen. There can be no military solution to the conflict there, and the sole priority must be focusing on the Yemeni people's interests.

Russia is open to cooperation in settling the conflict in Yemen as well as in advancing peace and stability throughout the Middle East. We consider Russia's concept for security and cooperation in the Persian Gulf — and, ultimately, the entire Middle East — very relevant. We will continue our efforts to implement it in consultation with all interested parties. We firmly believe that it will enable us to exchange the atmosphere of threat and confrontation in the region for one of dialogue and cooperation.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

I would like to begin by welcoming the presence among us of the new Permanent Representative of Yemen and wishing him every success in his duties. I would also like to thank the countries of the Gulf region, especially Kuwait, Oman and Saudi Arabia, for making it possible to foster hope at the meeting in Stockholm. I also thank Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, and Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, for their briefings, which underscored the need for the Security Council to remain united and engaged in the quest for durable solutions to the serious social, political and humanitarian crisis that has gripped Yemen for the past four years.

My delegation welcomes this briefing following the consultations that have been being held since 6 December in Stockholm between representatives of the Yemeni Government and the Houthi rebels. That is a testament to what humankind is capable of when will and good faith are in abundance. Let us recall that the purpose of those consultations was to establish a framework conducive to constructive exchanges on thorny issues between the protagonists, as well as to build confidence in order to facilitate the settlement of the political and humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

My country thanks the Swedish authorities for hosting those important consultations to give peace a chance in Yemen. We were satisfied to note the personal commitment of Secretary-General António Guterres, which led to the success of the negotiations in Stockholm. My delegation welcomes the fact that, in a context of heightened tensions, the consultations led to an agreement that, among other things, focuses on an immediate ceasefire in the port city of Al-Hudaydah, a strategic city through which more than 75 per cent of humanitarian aid passes, the redeployment of forces outside the city within a maximum of 21 days starting from the entry into force of the ceasefire, the establishment of a joint committee, overseen by the United Nations, to oversee redeployment and mine clearance, and the cessation of hostilities in the besieged city of Taiz, which should be accessible again thanks to the opening of humanitarian corridors.

My delegation welcomes the relative calm observed over the past few days in the Yemeni theatre of conflict, as well as the signing of the agreement reached prior to the beginning of the talks. That includes the exchange of more than 15,000 prisoners, thanks to the mediation of Special Envoy Griffiths. The inter-Yemeni consultations that just concluded in Stockholm generate new hope for peace and could also serve as a prelude to the end of the suffering endured by the Yemeni people since the outbreak of hostilities — which have plunged this country into one of the most worst humanitarian crises, according to the United Nations. In that regard, Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the strong and encouraging gesture of the symbolic handshake between the Yemeni Minister for Foreign Affairs and the representative of the Houthi rebels, in the presence of the Secretary-General.

Despite the hope kindled by the talks for an end to the crisis in Yemen, several points of contention remain. I refer to the reopening of Sana'a airport to international civilian traffic and its oversight and, ultimately, political arrangements between the parties to the conflict for the final settlement of this crisis. My delegation remains concerned about the development of

those troublesome issues and calls on the belligerents to remain willing to continue discussions, without preconditions, in accordance with the commitments made at the end of the Stockholm consultations, with a view to holding upcoming negotiations scheduled for January.

My country commends and encourages the organs and agencies of the United Nations system for their efforts to restore peace in Yemen. We also congratulate the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy for their involvement in the peace process in the region. My delegation hopes that all efforts undertaken by the international community will lead to lasting solutions for the well-being of the Yemeni people, as well as for security and stability on the Arabian peninsula.

Finally, Côte d'Ivoire calls for a peaceful and definitive settlement of the crisis, with respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yemen, in the interest of its people. We also urge all stakeholders to strengthen the negotiating framework to render it more inclusive, in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Saadi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on presiding over the Security Council this month. I wish you and the friendly delegation of Côte d'Ivoire all the best. I would also like to thank you for giving us this opportunity to address the Council.

I wish to thank Mr. Martin Griffiths and Mr. Mark Lowcock for their valuable briefings and efforts. On behalf of the Government and the people of Yemen, I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to the Government and the people of Sweden for hosting the round of consultations on Yemen held from 6 to 13 December. I would also like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to Secretary-General António Guterres for his personal commitment to, and interest in, supporting the efforts at bringing peace to Yemen, as well as for attending the final consultations in Sweden.

We have come to this meeting today filled with great hope and optimism thanks to what was achieved in the consultations that concluded yesterday in Sweden, which focused on confidence-building measures. Although we had greater hopes to bring to an end to everything causing the suffering of the Yemeni people, we remain cautious due to our previous experiences, especially as the Houthi militias have not only shown a lack of commitment to previous agreements but have in fact turned against them every time. We have signed more than 75 agreements with those militias since the start of their aggression, which has been sponsored by Iran for four years. They did not implement their side of the agreements.

We look forward to the United Nations shouldering its responsibility for implementing the agreements. What was recently agreed upon with the Houthis will remain a dead letter until implemented on the ground. That would then reflect their sincere intentions and pave the way towards further positive steps on other matters. In that regard, we highly appreciate the efforts made by Special Envoy Griffiths and his team, as well as the countries sponsoring the political process in Yemen, particularly our brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the State of Kuwait and the Sultanate of Oman. Their efforts facilitated the holding and success of that round of consultations, as well as reaching an agreement to put an end to the suffering of hostages, prisoners, detainees and those who have been missing and forcefully disappeared or abducted. The return of those people will ensure smiles on the faces of their mothers, children and parents. In addition, the efforts made have led to an agreement on the withdrawal from the port city of Al-Hudaydah and the declaration of understanding on Taiz.

The Government of Yemen has made many concessions to end the suffering, which continues to burden the living conscience of everyone. We have said time and again that we stand ready to go all the way to bring peace to Yemen, because we are the ones most keen to end the suffering of our people. We will seize any serious opportunity to bring about real, just, comprehensive and sustainable peace, based on the three terms of reference agreed upon, namely, the Gulf Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015).

The Government of Yemen reaffirms that it will continue its sincere efforts to reach peaceful solutions that put an end to the coup d'état, restore the legitimate State institutions and resume the political process from where it was stopped before the coup. His Excellency President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi of the Republic of

Yemen emphasized that the Yemeni Government is ready to participate anywhere and anytime in any future peace consultations, on the condition that the Houthi militias actually implement what was in Sweden.

We had also hoped to reach agreement on the remaining issues, such as taking confidence-building measures concerning the opening of Sana'a airport, ending the siege on the city of Taiz and reaching an economic agreement. However, the intransigence of the Houthis, backed by Iran, and their insistence on continuing the suffering of the Yemeni people have squandered our hope.

We recently heard members of the Security Council and the international community in this Chamber express their deep concern for the continued Iranian support to the Houthi militias, including supplying them with missiles and weapons, in clear violation of international resolutions, especially resolutions 2216 (2015) and 2231 (2015). Iran continues to destabilize the region through its Houthi proxies and Hizbullah in Lebanon and other countries of the region. The Iranian regime will not succeed with that policy, and Yemenis will not accept such a policy of destabilizing security and stability. Iran must end its malice and stop interfering in the internal affairs of my country. The international community must bring further pressure to bear on the Iranian regime so as to alleviate the suffering of the Iranian people and harness its resources for the prosperity of its people, instead of leveraging support for terrorist groups and its proxies in the region.

The Government of Yemen undertook a number of measures to face the economic breakdown and deterioration of its currency, as well as to restore the Yemeni economy from the black market to the formal banking system. It also undertook measures to manage and regulate the demand on foreign currency. The most important results from the package of decisions and measures undertaken by the Government are as follows.

First, we succeeded in halting the economic breakdown and bringing about relative stability to the local currency, by promoting its value against foreign currencies. The exchange rate of the Yemeni Rial against the dollar moved from 840 rials to the dollar to approximately 450 rials recently.

Second, we restored a large part of cash and commercial transactions from the black market to the formal banking sector, which is committed to the international requirements and standards of transparency and combating the financing of terrorism and money laundering, especially after the Houthi militias used such money during the previous period in the black market in order to finance their activities after they took control of the Central Bank in Sana'a in 2015.

Third, we have provided financial and banking services and the necessary foreign currency to import basic foodstuffs to all Yemeni governorates at adequate prices, which are lower than the prices on the black market. That led to the availability of commodities in all governorates at reduced prices by all traders, as a result of the efforts of the legitimate Government to promote food security and restore its normalcy throughout the governorates.

Fourth, we have curbed the use of petroleum products and derivatives to finance armed groups and undertake money laundering, while reactivating the monitoring and regulating mechanisms to help achieve peace, enhance State institutions and promote our national economy.

Fifth, we have restored and regularized the payment of pensions in all governorates by the legitimate Government, despite the fact that the coup militias have confiscated the balances of different pension funds and institutions from the Central Bank in Sana'a.

Sixth, we have established an integrated system of procedures and execution plans on promoting State resources and rationalizing expenses to ensure the sustained and organized payment of salaries for civil servants all over the country.

Seventh, we are coordinating intensively with our brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to implement reconstruction and development programmes in Yemen. Works have started on the ground through the Saudi programme for reconstruction and development in some governorates in Yemen, especially by providing the necessary oil derivatives for generating electricity at a monthly cost of $60 million. That will enhance the ability of the Government to shoulder its responsibilities, particularly to pay salaries and improve the humanitarian situation.

The Government cannot undertake its economic and humanitarian responsibilities throughout Yemen without the support of the international community in all areas, or do so without compelling the coup militias to cease their activities and measures that lead only to

further humanitarian and economic deterioration in Yemen. Hence, the following should be implemented.

First, the relevant State institutions must be allowed to undertake their independent national duties and shoulder their responsibilities to safeguard the humanitarian and economic situations, especially the Yemeni Central Bank, the Ministry of Finance and all other affiliated institutions.

Secondly, coup militias must be stopped from carrying out practices that terrorize traders, banks and bankers. The aim is to benefit from the services and opportunities provided by the legitimate Government based in the interim capital, Aden.

Thirdly, all sovereign State revenues must be deposited in the Central Bank, under the supervision of the Ministry of Finance and the Yemeni legitimate Government, and the imposition of illegal fees and levies on the citizens must be halted.

Fourthly, freedom of trade and the movement must be allowed for commodities and money transfers among various governorates and bank branches and traders.

Fifthly, exports of oil derivatives must resume, including ensuring their safe passage from areas that are under the control of the coup militias.

Sixthly, coup militias must be stopped from interfering in the trade in oil derivatives and stop promoting the black market, especially when those militias sell at 150 per cent more than the regular prices, which worsens the deterioration of the humanitarian situation and the suffering of the citizens and could lead to the collapse of the local currency.

Seventhly, all international organizations working in Yemen or supporting it must make all their financial transactions through the Central Bank of Yemen.

Based on our national responsibilities towards our citizens, the Government of Yemen has attached great importance and priority to the humanitarian issue over the past four years, including launching its decentralization relief and humanitarian programme. Thanks to that programme, we have designated land and sea corridors in Yemen that will ensure the flow of humanitarian and relief assistance to the most-affected people and regions. The Government remains focused on alleviating the suffering of the Yemeni people and ensuring the delivery of humanitarian assistance throughout Yemen. In that regard, we highly commend the generous aid provided by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the State of Kuwait and all other sisterly and friendly countries.

The Government of Yemen welcomes the pledging conference to be held on 26 February 2019 under the auspices of the Secretary-General and the Governments of Sweden and Switzerland. We call upon friendly donor countries to support the humanitarian response plan and make their pledges in order to fill the financial gap and address the deteriorating economic situation in Yemen.

In conclusion, the outcome of the consultations held in Sweden is a serious step towards building trust. It bodes well for achieving peace, which is awaited by the great people of Yemen. The Government of Yemen continues to offer concessions, regardless of how difficult they are, to achieve sustainable peace based on the agreed upon terms of reference, because we believe that war is launched by fools and peace is made by the courageous.

We call on the Council to work on implementing its resolutions on the situation in Yemen, especially resolution 2216 (2015), in order to put an end to the conflict. We do not need more resolutions.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.